THE PORT FOLIO,

(NEW SERIES)

BY OLIVER OLDSCHOOL, ESQ.

Various, that the mind of desultory man, studious of change and pleased with novelty, may be indulged—Cowp.

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ORIGINAL PAPERS.

For The Port Folio.

TRAVELS.

LETTERS FROM GENEVA AND FRANCE.

Written during a residence of between two and three years in different parts of those countries, and addressed to a lady in Virginia.

(*Continued from page* 184.)

LETTER XLIV.

We could not bear that there should be but a few miles between us and a prospect of Italy, and determined to ascend the mountain on the evening of our arrival at Lanslebourg. We had figured to ourselves some projecting rock from which Hannibal might be supposed to have pointed out the fertile plains below to the impatient curiosity of his soldiers; but no such rock appeared; we found ourselves on a plain when we ascended, and this terminated by a gentle slope in a very pretty lake of between three and four miles in circuit. There was still some snow on the plain, but in small masses, and there was the commencement of a most luxuriant vegetation.

I have mentioned to you before, that the lake of Geneva is twelve hundred and forty feet above the sea; Lanslebourg is three thousand three hundred and eighty two feet above the lake of Geneva, and the plain of mount Cenis is about two thousand two hundred feet above Lanslebourg, so that the little Inn where your ——— and I found a bed for the night, is nearly seven thousand feet higher than the level of the sea.

We began to descend at a very early hour the next day, and found time to admire the great efforts which the labourers upon the new road were making under the direction of a skilful engineer: Our guide pointed out to us also a sharp rock of prodigious height far upon our left, on the pinnacle of which, is a Chapel dedicated to Notre dame de la Neige, whose image has been long renowned for

many miraculous cures, this holy image is still visited and adored by great numbers, in the month of August particularly, notwithstanding the fatal accidents which this dangerous pilgrimage has given rise to: two thousand persons have been seen there at a time, and as there is only room on the point of the rock for the Chapel, and within the Chapel for the Priest who officiates, the congregation is in clusters, as they can best place themselves, like pigeons, on a housetop: the priest whose mode of life may be supposed to have rendered him less expert in climbing, is generally assisted in the ascent and descent by a rope about his body; but it frequently happens, that some one, whom devotion has ceased to inspire, either falls asleep during the service, or makes a false step, or remains too late to find the way home, and is precipitated into the abyss. With a view of saving these pious people from danger, the government had the holy image removed to Sura, a few years before the revolution, but it was missing the next morning from the Sanctuary, where it had been deposited with all due reverence, and was found precisely in the niche it had formerly occupied: so at least are all the inhabitants of the neighbourhood persuaded, nor can they of course have the smallest doubt of the divine interposition on the occasion. I saw another Chapel similarly situated on the Savoye side of the Alps, to which it was customary, I was informed, to convey such infants as die without baptism, and whom the tenderness of their parents very naturally endeavoured to rescue from the penalties which the Roman church denounces in such cases: the child, after some time past in prayer by the attendants, and after the proper gifts have been placed on the altar, is always seen to give some sign of life, and this however small, is always such as justifies the immediate administration of baptism. It is interesting to observe how the human mind takes refuge in one absurdity from the consequences of another. You will find in the celebrated letters of Doctor Middleton from Rome, an account of these two Chapels, and some observations on the tendency which men in all ages have manifested to acts of worship on high places: but it is to be regretted, I think, that the degree of enthusiasm, which the mind so generally experiences in the pure air of lofty mountains, should be perverted to the purposes of superstition. We are now in Italy; to the bleak rocks and snowy extremities which surrounded the plain of mount Cenis, succeeded the verdant fields and vineyards of the neighbourhood of La Novaleze, and a softness and sweetness in the air not unlike the refreshing breezes of the sea after a hot day. You will find an account of Piedmont in any history of modern Europe, and will learn how the Dukes of Savoye were first entitled to a portion of that fertile country, and how they had been able to add one province to another.

It was the opinion of Victor Amadeus, that all Italy might be got possession of in some manner, with the precaution which a man exercises when he eats an artichoke of taking it leaf by leaf. The private history of that great Prince is also very interesting. He had rendered the most eminent services to his people, he had aggrandised his dominions, and added a regal title to the hereditary honours of his family, but his arts

of cunning and intrigue had recoiled on himself, he was under the necessity of abdicating, in order to get clear of contradictory engagements, and having afterwards expressed a desire to reassume his former station, and taken some measures to ensure success, he was torn from his bed at midnight and shut up in a Castle; nothing which has been alleged in vindication of his son, has made me cease to think, with execration of his conduct on this occasion.

The Alps terminate by a much more rapid descent on the side of Piedmont than of Savoye, after which, the traveller finds himself in a plain, which is by no means the case on the other side, where the surface of the earth for a considerable distance might be compared to the enormous waves of some great ocean in a storm: on both sides, the effects of an immense body of water in rapid motion at some distant period of time are very apparent from circumstances which my former descriptions, if you have not forgotten them, will suggest to you. As soon as the charm of breathing the air of Italy had a little subsided, I began to be struck with the knavery and imposition of the few people we had anything to do with, with the number of beggars in the small towns, and with the apparent poverty and wretchedness of the inhabitants, in what appeared one of the most fertile countries I had seen, where agriculture and the science of irrigation (and I think it deserves the name of science) seemed so well undersood.

The Piedmontese countenance is very generally an animated one, but it too generally seems connected with that sort of imagination which would make a man an active member of a troop of banditti; hundreds might sit for the picture of Gil Blas's Captain Rolando. Those I saw at work in the fields were generally ragged and had a hungry look; one poor man was ploughing with a miserable horse, and a little half-starved cow fastened to the same yoke: The drivers of carts and waggons were generally fast asleep on their loads. We now began to study the language, as Dean Swift somewhere mentions his studying poetry, and though the Piedmontese be but a sort of half Italian, it was impossible not to remark its superiour melody over the French of the other side of the Alps. We passed through Suze, once distinguished for its Citadel, but this famous Brunetta, this key of the Alps, has been laid in ruins during the late war and exhibits a most dreary appearance; we next passed through St. Antonin and stopped for a night at St. Ambrosio, where the church though small appeared to your ——— and myself the very perfection of architecture. There were some good pictures too, over the several altars, and we were now, we felt ourselves, in a country, where the arts had long been cultivated. The valley which had gradually widened, was here about a mile and a half across, and the two projecting branches of the Alps were seen to terminate abruptly.

Mr. De Saussure, to whom I am indebted for everything that approaches an appearance of science in my descriptions, has described both these eminences with his usual accuracy. On mount Musinet which is to the left of the traveller who leaves the Alps, he found a great many pieces of a sort of stone, which though perfectly opaque to appearance, is rendered transparent by being dipt

in water. Doctor Johnson would have called it hydrophanous, and he would have found some other epithet to express its being also rendered transparent when exposed to the action of fire: it would in either case afford a very happy emblem of a drunken or an angry man, who discloses all he has upon his mind. On the opposite mountain, which is called mount Picheriano, stand the very respectable remains of the Abbey of St. Michael, the monks of which having refused to submit to some new regulations towards the end of the sixteenth century, and change their mode of living, which was thought too worldly and luxurious, were removed to other convents, and their Abbey deserted. I have seen nothing in Europe more calculated to impress the mind with awe than this ancient religious house seated on a pinnacle which rises full sixteen hundred feet perpendicularly above the streets of St. Ambrosio. The church is in very good repair, and a great part of the Abbey habitable; from about the centre of it there descends a stair case between a double row of tombs into a spacious vault below, and there, placed on a projection from the wall, are seen the dead of former times in the habit of their order; they are such probably as were removed from the tombs where they were first placed, in order to make room for others of their brethren, and the bones which are scattered about the immense floor, show that the removal was frequently destructive to what remained of the human frame in these wretched objects; a venerable Benedictine has chosen this place for his residence, and stays here through the year with another individual who rings the bell of the church at certain hours and assists the good man in celebrating mass. He is said to be in comfortable circumstances, and to receive with great hospitality such as choose to visit him. What a fine scene would this Abbey have afforded Mrs. Radcliffe! she might have described a traveller as taking shelter there in a stormy night, and as wandering down the great stair-case with one solitary taper; a gust of wind might have extinguished this taper, and in the midst of a noise of desolation over head from repeated peals of thunder, and the howling of the storm; the succeeding flashes of lightning might have disclosed this scene of horrour to his astonished eyes. It is not unworthy of remark that Mr. De Saussure found several pebbles of various sorts of stone upon this eminence, and that they all appeared to have been rolled along in some current of water.

The approach to Turin is by a level road which was formerly shaded by a double row of trees, but the greater part of them have been sacrificed at different times to the wants of the French or Russians, who were quartered in the neighbourhood during the war. Turin, which is interesting from its great antiquity, which was beseiged and taken by Hannibal, and relieved by Prince Eugene so many centuries after, and which the Princes of Savoye had adorned with many stately buildings, and all the appendages of a court, has long been distinguished as the residence of several eminent artists: it is a very handsome place of seventy or eighty thousand souls. The greater part of the streets cross each other at right angles and as the houses of the one by which we entered, were set off by tapestry let down from

the windows in honour of the Féte Dieu, we thought it by far the most superb city we had seen in Europe. We joined the crowd at mass in the great church, and stood behind the soldiers who were drawn up as it passed: such pomp of exteriour worship, such paganism, and so little devotion, quite put me out of conceit with the Roman Catholick system, and the coarse jokes of the soldiers, who were kept from their dinner, expressed how little they felt themselves concerned in what was going on, or respected the occasion of their being under arms.

LETTER XLV.

You cannot expect that I should attempt to describe a place which I staid but two day at; I must refer you therefore as I did in the South of France, to some printed account, which you may easily procure, and will only say a word or two of the Superga. This is an elegant church built on a high hill in the neighbourhood of Turin, it is much admired for the architecture, for the handsome pillars which support the dome, and for the pictures and statues which it contains. In the vault below, which on any other occasion might pass for a handsome place of worship, are the tombs of several of the Kings of Sardinia. That of Victor Amadeus attracted our attention above all, both from admiration of that great Prince, who contributed so much to enlarge the possessions of which his posterity has been despoiled, and for the admirable sculpture which adorns it. Your ——— was particularly struck with the beauty and perfection of a female figure, which is meant to represent religion. It has indeed all the noble simplicity which best adorns that daughter of heaven, but he did not like that the emblems which are held out as caracterestick of divinity, should be a wafer and a cup.

From the cupola or top of the dome, the view is carried over an extensive country either of plains or of moderate hills, and is bounded on two sides by the Alps, where the various passages by which different armies have entered Italy from the time of Hannibal to that of Bonaparte, may be easily and accurately traced; a variety of towns and villages are also spread out under the observer, or appear to bound the horizon; he easily distinguishes the eminence in the neighbourhood of Turin, where the French headquarters were, when Prince Eugene attacked them, and the attendant will point out to him the palaces which were once the pride of the royal house of Savoye, but which are now the residence of persons, whom fortune seems to be amusing herself with, as the Sultan does with the hospitable Hasan in the Arabian Night's Entertainments.

Though the government of this country was acknowledged even at the time of its existence, to be mild and paternal, there must have been some defects in the administration, or surely the inhabitants would not have submitted after so short a defence; a degree of republicanism had perhaps sprung up amid the mercantile opulence of Turin; and it is certain, that the officers of the royal army, had rendered themselves odious by treating all other professions with contempt; these, added to the love of change so natural to the human mind, were materials, which the poison of French principles, inculcated with all the energy of successful warfare, was

well calculated to work upon. The Sovereign himself was a good man, but weak and bigoted to excess, and the politicks of his ally the Emperour of Germany, were those of a cold-hearted, selfish individual. What would you think of a master of a vessel, who before he relieved another in distress, were to stipulate for a third or a half of the cargo? We went to the play at night, it happened to be the Glorieux of Destouches, which was miserably misunderstood and ill represented, and I was shocked, as I am at every French play, with the multiplied absurdities that arose from the authour's determination to preserve the unity of place.

From Turin, we made a short day's journey to Cigliano, and entering the new Italian Kingdom near Vercelli, proceeded through Novarra and Buffalona to Milan: There is no part of Europe perhaps where the rivers are more destructive in their inundations than in Italy, and yet none where the inhabitants know so well how to avail themselves of water in the cultivation of their lands; where a stream descends from neighbouring mountains, it is generally with great rapidity, and it is easy if the means and knowledge is possessed, to give such a direction to a portion of it, as with less fall, will carry it gently along to any part of the country where it may be wanted; the canals which have been constructed for this purpose in Italy, serve also in many instances, as a mode of conveyance for merchandise, and for the produce of the soil; in rising from the low grounds of the Sesia, we passed three of them at the distance of some hundred yards from each other; they were like artificial rivers more than canals, and must in the course of their return to the parent stream communicate the benefits of irrigation to a prodigious extent; they afford also a great facility to the establishment of various sorts of mills. One advantage which the Italians derive from the diffusion of water, is the facility of cultivating rice. Their mode of culture is a very different one from that practised in Carolina, the grain being sown at broad cast, and the land kept continually flowed; to this subject however, and to the other sorts of culture which I could judge of myself, or obtain any information about, I mean hereafter to devote a letter or perhaps two, and will only observe at present that the neighbourhood of rice fields seems as unfavourable to health in Italy, as it is in Carolina.

The labouring people both in Piedmont and in the Milanese make a more miserable appearance than our negroes; they are as badly clothed, and scarcely eat meat from one year's end to another. They are none of them indeed owners of the soil they till, and but very few hold their farms directly of the proprietor; a middle man steps in between, and he, as you may suppose, has his fortune to make, and the expense of some luxury to defray: great possessions or large farms may and do contribute to many improvements in canals, in machinery, and in the breed of cattle, but they leave a large portion of mankind very miserably provided for: you will see this subject which I confess I understand but very imperfectly, well treated by Arthur Young.

If you trace us on the map, you will perceive that our road on the confines of Piedmont and Milanese, led through a country of many rivers: these are generally crossed on bridges of boats, and

are extremely rapid; the Tesino is particularly so, and the neighbouring low grounds have all the appearance of being frequently overflowed: it was upon the banks of this river that the first action took place in Italy between the Carthaginians and the Romans; the astonishment of the Consul Scipio in hearing that Hannibal had crossed the Alps, must have been still greater than that of the Austrian General in 1801, and nothing could be more precipitate than his conduct: the Austrian General on the contrary appears to have reposed in fatal security, and had already lost some of his artillery of reserve, and his principal hospitals, before he seems to have believed that he should be attacked. After all, the battle of Marengo, is still an inexplicable event, the French were certainly defeated during the greater part of the day, nor is it possible to account for the despair and consternation of the Austrians the day after. A great many stories are told which remind me of those that circulated in America after the defeat of Count de Grasse; and this battle of Marengo, will, in all probability, be as great a mystery to posterity as it is to us. Providence which intends, and which always in the end, establishes what is best, proceeds by means best known to itself, and by ways, which to our feeble comprehension, are all mystery and contradiction. Not far from the field of battle of Scipio and of Hannibal, and probably near the village of Ro, which we passed through a few days afterwards on the road from Milan to Sesto, was the scene of Marius's great victory over the Cimbri; you may read the particulars in Plutarch, and can easily suppose how much a reference to such events in history renders a journey more interesting.

It has been the hard fate of the people of the Milanese that their country has been for ages an object of contest to the greater powers of Europe, while they have possessed hardly any more means, or expressed any more inclination of taking part upon the occasion, than a parcel of frogs do, when two bulls are fighting in the neighbouring meadow. It is certain at least, that they have patiently submitted to be trampled upon by both parties.

We found the roads good, and the inns tolerable; there had been several robberies committed the year before, but every danger of that sort was supposed to be now at an end, though we met the Gendarmerie once or twice conducting prisoners along to a place of trial; some of these wretches had such abominable countenances that they haunted our imagination for several days afterwards, and particularly when we were later than usual in arriving at our inn. Our driver showed us a place not far from the Tesino, where the Diligence had been fired on two years ago; the coachman, a postillion, and the guard with three inside passengers were killed, but the horses taking fright, ran away with the carriage to the next posthouse, and thus saved a considerable sum of money which had been the object of the villains who fired. The inns, as I said, are tolerable, they are generally very large buildings with long corridors, which give privacy to the rooms, and a balcony in front, and as to the living, it did for hungry travellers who piqued themselves upon not being very delicate. The dishes generally contained what appeared like scraps, and I do not believe that

a joint of meat in any shape whatsoever was a thing ever heard of out of the butcher's shop.

As I was walking along the balcony of one of these inns, I met with a French general of division, who seemed a well behaved and well informed man: we spoke of the revolution, which he had served in from the beginning. La Fayette, he said, was unfit for the part he undertook; but *this man* had a strong head and a transcendant genius: two crowns in so short a time was what the world had never witnessed before, and all Italy was at his disposal. I asked what was the political liberty so solemnly promised to the Italians at the late coronation? What it consisted in and how it was secured? They were words of course he said to which the people themselves attached no meaning. He spoke a little English, and talked of Thomson and Pope, like a man who had read these authours, but he astonished me by asking whether the Americans were really an independent sovereign people or not. I fancy we are not so much the objects of attention and admiration on this said of the ocean, as we are apt to imagine.

We now approached the ancient city of Milan over a well cultivated plain, but I saw no country seats and met with no travellers; there were some loaded carts and waggons, the drivers of which, or rather they who ought to have been the drivers, were fast asleep, and a few people at work in the fields who looked wretchedly. The sound of the French language was no longer heard, and we were struck with the soft terminations and melodious flow of the Italian whenever we passed a village, and heard persons conversing. A beggar asking charity made use of words which seemed to command it, and even the accents of a coachman talking to his horses were delightful; they were such as a lover might be satisfied to make use of in pouring out his heart to his mistress. I began by degrees to recollect the little I had formerly learnt of Italian, and we made out better than you would imagine.

BIOGRAPHY.

JOHN LOCKE.

This memorable person was of ancient and respectable descent; but he derived little from ancestry, in comparison of the services he rendered his name and nation. He was born August 29, 1632, in a mean house, near the church of Wrington, Somersetshire, where his mother was unexpectedly seized with labour, as she was passing to her husband's seat at Pensford. After a domestick education for some years, he was at length sent to Westminster school, and thence to Christ-church, Oxford, where he pursued his studies with unremitting assiduity; but the peculiar turn of his mind was strongly marked, and he was more admired than beloved, and more the object of wonder than an example for others. His attention was principally directed to the study of physick, intending it perhaps for his future profession; but legislation and metaphysicks engaged no small share of his time and attention. Indeed his health suffered considerably by his exertions. He left Oxford as secretary to sir William Swan, envoy to the court of Brandenburgh, and thence accompanied the earl of Northumberland; afterwards he attended lord chancellor Shaftesbury as secretary, who placed him at the Board of Works, with a salary of 500*l*. However, he held these employments but a little while. Sir William Swan returned; lord Northumberland died at Turin; Shaftesbury lost the seals; and the Board of Works was suppressed. Previous to

this period, he had published his Work "On the Human Understanding," and he now renewed his attack on the Aristotelian system; but a consumptive habit compelled him to seek the genial air of Montpellier, where he continued his correspondence with those worthy men Sydenham and Mapletoft. Lord Shaftesbury, when restored to office, invited his return, and in six months that profligate nobleman fled for safety to Holland, whither Locke accompanied him. Proscribed by James II, he remained in concealment until he sailed with William III, for England. As a commissioner of appeal in the Excise, he received 200*l.* per annum; and he had the offer of an envoyship in Germany, which was much beneath his merit. Ill health and disgust induced him to seek an asylum at Oates, in Essex, the seat of Sir Francis Masham, which he left for three years on being appointed one of the commissioners of trade and plantations; but he returned again to Oates, where he breathed his last October 28, 1704, in the 73d year of his age, with the serenity that religion and virtue only can bestow. He was buried, by his own desire, in the cemetery at Oates. He had received from lady Masham all that attention and tenderness due to his age and literary character. Mr. Locke died unmarried. We still admire his writings, but his theories are too refined for practice: that which appears well in the study, ill suits the government of a community. He formed a code of laws for Carolina, which was soon abandoned as impracticable. His system of education *had* many admirers, but has few followers at present. That of toleration does equal honour to his head and his heart. Moderate in his wishes, temperate in all his habits, he felt neither the stings of ambition, nor those of avarice; but his intimacy with Shaftesbury sullied his fame. His life, his writings, his manner of living and dying, prove that he had firm faith in revealed religion. His irritability of temper may be excused from the weakness of his frame. His energetick letters to the vain and affected earl of Shaftesbury, authour of the Characteristicks, are such as would have converted any man who had not been besotted with "philosophy, vainly so called;" for those who have read them bedewed the MS. with their tears. But what is so callous as the heart of an infidel? Locke not only well understood the writings of the great apostle of the Gentiles, but the duties which Christ taught. He says, "Our Saviour's great rule, that we should love our neighbour as ourselves, is such a fundamental truth for the regulating human society, that by that alone we might, without difficulty, determine all the cases and doubts in social morality*".

STATE OF THE QUESTION.

It has been asked, what is the state of the question now at issue, on the great contested points of monarchy and democracy?

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* It is singular that Locke, to whom a successful party was so much indebted—(it is even said that William III's throne was established by his writings)—never gave him either honours or any suitable emoluments living, nor erected a memorial to his memory. Queen Caroline placed his bust with those of Bacon, Newton, and Clarke, in her pavilion, in Richmond park, rather as a philosopher, than as an advocate for Christianity. Bacon explored nature, Newton the celestial regions, Locke sought the anatomy of the human mind, and Clarke attempted to purify religion from superstition. As philosophers, the two former are, and perhaps ever will be, unrivalled; but Locke was sometimes too much a metaphysician, and Clarke errs by his fears of believing too much. In the garden of Mrs. More's elegant cottage, near Wrington, Mr. Locke's humble native village, is placed an urn inscribed:

This Urn,
sacred to the memory,
of JOHN LOCKE,
a native of this village,
was presented to Mrs. HANNAH MORE,
by Mrs. MONTAGUE.

My reply is, that I am not qualified *coolly* to state it; but from the collision of opinions, one spark of information, one great and important fact has burst forth and been diffused, which renders it no longer a mere controversial subject, or a matter of speculation; it now comes home to men's bosoms, as a question of taste; a question of feeling; a question of property; a question of life; and is reduced to the following simple axiom, addressed from one of the parties, to the other, frequently wrapped up, it is true, in various forms, and different expressions:

"*You have property, and I have none; but I am determined, if possible, to gain possession of it, at all risks, and by every means in my power.*"

If this, my statement, be correct, and from ocular, as well as auricular demonstration, I have strong reasons for being of opinion, that it is so; what can we say, or what ought we to think of those, who are so sanguine, urgent, busy, and persevering, in bellowing for an increase of popular power, and augmenting the weight already so dangerously preponderating in the democratick scale.

Such reasoners are like *bottle-holders* to an athletick boxer, cheering him, and giving him cordials, when he has already crippled his antagonist; and certain pathetick declamations against increasing the influence of the crown, are like giving a tedious lecture on the danger of galloping, to a traveller pursued by highwaymen.

"Is nothing then to be done, to sooth popular discontent?" says an exasperated reformer at my elbow, "would you make no concessions?"

In universal suffrage, shorter parliaments, &c. in a word, political power; for that is what they all mean, not a single iota.

To *re*cede or *con*cede the breadth of a hair, under our present circumstances, and with men's minds in their present state of morbid irritability, would infallibly crush us to atoms.

But while I would recommend the most unfeeling obduracy to ministers, as politicians and statesmen, I would endeavour to awaken their sensibilities, as Christians and as men; I would earnestly recommend that, which I hope and believe they have earnestly at heart, to augment the comforts, and diminish the burthens of the people; to retrench superfluity in publick expense, and reduce all enormous salaries; thus would pleasure and duty go hand in hand.

I am fully aware, that I differ widely in opinion on this subject, with men, whom I venerate and love; but situated as we are, and on *such* a subject, friendship and personal attachment must yield to a more sacred duty; I again repeat that I would not add the ninety-nine thousandth part of a grain, or an inch, to the prescribed space and momentum of the democratick branch of our constitution; I am fully persuaded, that were the people set fully at liberty, on the points *they demand*, we should instantly become the most miserable and ignoble of slaves ourselves; in that case, I would instantly set sail for Algiers, or become a subject of Napoleon's *brother* Emperour, his imperial majesty of Morocco.

I may be mistaken; but with due reverence, I call the Almighty to witness, that in the present perverted state of men's minds, nothing, in my opinion, can preserve the reign of law, religion and

tranquillity, but the cannon, the bayonet, and musquet; under the direction of fortitude, prudence, moderation, and publick spirit; *res duræ talia cogunt.*

The hand which does not firmly grasp the sword, will soon lose the sceptre.

Another palpable truth, collaterally connected with the present question, has also been established; that human hands and human hearts are not pure and clean enough to conduct a republick, and that it is a form of government, in every instance, incompatible with external tranquillity, and internal peace; this point it is true had been decided many ages since; but modern theorists, had set an old question again afloat, and many modern reasoners were disposed to doubt the fact.

It has pleased Providence, in compassion to human infirmity, to establish the opinion I have given, beyond a doubt, by the past and present state of the ci-devant republick, but now absolute monarchy of France: may the question be considered as everlastingly settled; may it never again be agitated by erroneous zeal, or the malignancy of ill-design.

[*Lounger's Commonplace Book.*

For The Port Folio.

CRITICISM.

For who, the bards among,
May but compare with thee, lamented *Gray!*
Whose pensive solemn lay
Drew all the list'ning shepherds in a ring,
Well pleased to hear thee sing
Thy moving notes, on sunny hill or plain,
And catch new grace from thy immortal strain. *Anon.*

ODE—*On Spring.*

'The original manuscript title,' says Mr. Mason, 'which Mr. Gray gave to this ode, was *Noontide;* probably, he then meant to write two more, descriptive of *Morning* and *Evening;* his unfinished *Ode on the pleasures arising from Vicissitude,* opens with a fine description of the former; and his *Elegy,* with as beautiful a picture of the latter, which, perhaps, he might at that time have meditated upon as the exordium of an ode; but this is only conjecture. It may, however, be remarked, that these three capital descriptions abound with ideas which affect the ear more than the eye; and therefore go beyond the powers of picturesque imitation.'

The description of Morning, alluded to by Mr. Mason, it will give the reader pleasure to see:

Now the golden Morn aloft
Waves her dew-bespangled wing;
With vermil cheek and whisper soft,
She wooes the tardy Spring:
Till April starts and calls around
The sleeping fragrance from the ground;
And lightly o'er the living scene,
Scatters his freshest tend'rest green.

New-born flocks, in rustick dance,
Frisking ply their feeble feet;
Forgetful of their wintry trance,
The birds his presence greet:
But chief the skylark warbles high
His trembling, thrilling ecstasy;
And lessening from the dazzled sight,
Melts into air and liquid light.

Here we are irresistibly tempted to recur to the description of Morning, by Cunningham. It is always pleasing to compare various pictures of the same subject; but in the present instance, our principal object is that of showing from the productions of the two poets, what that species of excellence is, which constitutes the characteristick beauty of Gray:

In the barn the tenant cock,
Close to partlet perched on high,
Briskly crows, (the shepherd's clock)
Jocund that the morning's nigh.

Swiftly from the mountain's brow,
Shadows nursed by night, retire;
And the peeping sunbeam now
Paints with gold the village spire.

Philomel forsakes the thorn,
Plaintive where she prates at night,
And the lark, to meet the morn,
Soars beyond the shepherd's sight.

From the low-roofed cottage ridge,
See the chattering swallow spring;
Darting through the one-arched bridge,
Quick she dips her dappled wing.

Now the pine-tree's waving top
Gently greets the morning gale:
Kidlings now begin to crop
Daisies in the dewy dale.

From the balmy sweets, uncloyed,
(Restless till her task be done)
Now the busy bee 's employed,
Sipping dew before the sun.

Trickling through the creviced rock,
Where the limpid stream distils,
Sweet refreshment waits the flock,
When 'tis sun-drove from the hills.

Colin, for the promised corn
(Ere the harvest hopes are ripe)
Anxious hears the huntsman's horn,
Boldly sounding, drown his pipe.

Sweet,—oh sweet, the warbling throng,
On the white emblossomed spray!
Nature's universal song
Echoes to the rising day!

There is a strong similitude between the last of these stanzas, and an unfinished one of Mr. Gray, which immediately follows those we have above transcribed:

Rise, my soul! on wings of fire,
Rise, the rapt'rous choir among;
Hark, 'tis *Nature* strikes the lyre;
And leads the *general song!*

It is difficult to believe, that one of these passages was not the parent of the other, but whether Gray copied Cunningham, or Cunningham Gray, it is not easy to determine. Gray died in 1771, and Cunningham in 1773. It is not probable that the fragment of Gray's Ode was made publick, till after his death; but whether Cunningham's *Day* was written so early as 1766, when he printed his Poems, *chiefly Pastoral*, we are not informed. There seems to us, however, great reason to believe that Gray wrote his stanzas after having read the pastoral of Cunningham. In that pastoral, there is, we think beyond contradiction, scenes of images, so painted as to delight us more than those of Mr. Gray; but Cunningham is a painter, Gray a poet: we see and hear the *tenant-cock*, and nothing can better describe the cheerful crowing of the bird, or refresh the mind with more hilarity than the verse—

Jocund that the morning's nigh.

How delicious, how visible, how vivid, when he tells us:

Swiftly from the mountain's brow
Shadows, nursed by night, retire;
And the peeping sunbeam now
Paints with gold the village spire.

Cunningham describes, Gray personifies: thus the latter—

Now, the golden morn aloft
Waves her dew-bespangled wing;
With vermil cheek and whisper soft,
She wooes the tardy Spring.

Cunningham, making less use of his imagination than of his eyes, sees nothing *waving* but the lighter trees,

Now the pine-tree's waving top
Gently greets the morning gale.

Gray's imagination appears to great advantage in the couplet,—

Till April starts, and calls around
The *sleeping fragrance* from the ground.

This is true poetry; indulging the metaphor, it is a charming personification; dropping it, it is a physical truth. The herbs and flowers, inactive, asleep, during the winter, have their juices set in motion, and are raised to spread their odours in the Spring.

Gray's *new-born flocks*, plying their *feeble feet*, remind us of, but do not, I think, set before us, a charming scene. There is more clearness and chastity of diction in Cunningham's description of his *kidlings:* we may think of the one, but we see the other:

Kidlings, now, begin to crop
Daisies, in the dewy dale.

The very circumstance of the kidlings *beginning* to crop, leads my thoughts to the earliest period of the morning, and fixes my eyes on the noses of the animals, smelling the herbs, and selecting, with some daintiness, the first daisy to be cropped. It must not be forgotten, however, that the *kidlings* are descriptive of morning; the new-born flocks of April. But the passage in which the genius of Gray stands most contradistinguished with that of Cun-

ningham, and in which his superiority as a poet is most conspicuous, are the following:

And the lark to meet the morn,
Soars beyond the Shepherd's sight.

But chief, the skylark warbles high
His trembling thrilling ecstasy;
And lessening from the dazzled sight,
Melts into air and liquid light.

Cunningham's image is so familiar, his diction so unencumbered, that we scarcely give him the praise he deserves for presenting it with so little ostentation to our mind, the manner in which it is drawn is so strong, that, though little is said, everything is told. When Gray speaks of the song of the bird, we turn to see in what manner Cunningham has treated this circumstance, and discover, with surprise, that that song which we heard while we read his verses is not so much as mentioned. Our eyes had followed the bird, till it soared—beyond the Shepherd's sight; and, devoted to the gratification of one sense, we had never doubted that our ears, all the while, had received their portion of delight. When the lark rose *to meet the morn*, and when it rose higher, we were satisfied that it sung. We recommend these verses as a study to poets and painters: it is a striking example of the power of single ideas so completely to engross the mind as to induce a belief of the existence of all accessory circumstances; a phenomenon, this, which is also of the highest interest to the metaphysician, and which is one of the most remarkable, as well as important in the history of the human faculties. To the philosopher, it explains many mental illusions; to the artist, who is to create those illusions, it evinces the superfluity, if not injuriousness of minute details, and the facility with which the imagination is to be filled with one characteristick idea, which leads along with it all the associate ideas. When I see the Venus de Medicis, I forget the whiteness of the marble; we forget that there is no lustre in the eye, no rose on the cheek, no ruby on the lip; we know nothing of the absence of these; the beauty of the form fixes our whole eye; and our mind, occupied with this, supposes all the rest.

But, Gray has described the song of the Lark, and described it so exquisitely, that it renews in us the sensations experienced from the song itself.

His *trembling thrilling* ECSTASY.

Cunningham omits it altogether, and, in a vague way, we believe we heard it; Gray brings it distinctly to our ear; we are no longer careless about it; we listen, we catch every note; we imbibe all, and we are ravished. It is thus with the statue of the Venus. We believe that the eyes glisten and the lips glow, and our imagination feels no vacuum; but when a painter absolutely shows me the brightnesss of the one and the redness of the other, my state of mere acquiescence is exchanged for that of admiration. With the first we were not displeased; with the second, we are enraptured.

By the way, Gray is fond of the word *thrilling*, and we take this fondness as evidence of the vivacity of his feelings. He applies it to musick and poetry; and we infer an ear delicately sensible to both. Mr. Burke speaks of pleasures which only the liveliest imagination, and the most sound and exquisitely sensible body could enjoy; and it is for such imagination and such a body as here supposed, to talk of *thrilling*.—We must by no means omit to notice the beauty of the epithet *trembling*: we both see and hear the lark.

Gray, however, has not merely filled up the picture, he has redrawn it; and, in that part where he encounters the same particular as that selected by Cunningham, it is impossible not to see that, if the image is not more strongly, it is at the least, more poetically drawn:

And the lark, to meet the morn,
Soars beyond the Shepherd's sight.
And lessening from the dazzled sight,

Melts into air and liquid light.

The *lessening from the dazzled sight* is a natural picture, which Cunningham himself might have given; but the *melting into air and liquid light* is peculiarly Gray's. It unites physical truth with all the beauty of metaphor and all the grace of diction.

It is these high poetical pretensions that justify Mr. Wakefield in attributing to Gray all that Horace demands of a poet:

Ingenium cui sit, cui mens divinior, atque os
Magna sonaturum, de nominis hujus honorem. HOR.
Creative genius, and the glow divine
That warms and melts th' enthusiastick soul;
A pomp and prodigality of phrase,
These form the poet, and these shine in thee.

But there are vices on every side; and, if Mr. Gray rarely err on that of simplicity, it must be confessed that he is not wholly free from blame on its opposite; a topick on which it would be more proper to enlarge in a general view of the merits of this elegant poet: of our sentiments on these merits some notion may be collected from this, that in closing the preceding sentence, we were about to call him a *charming* poet, when our judgment condemned the epithet, as unappropriate, and dictated the substitution of that of *elegant*, conveying a eulogium which we cannot better support than by transcribing the remaining stanzas of the beautiful fragment by which we have been led into this long digression:

Yesterday the sullen year
Saw the snowy whirlwind fly;
Mute was the musick of the air,
The herd stood drooping by:
Their raptures now that wildly flow,
No yesterday nor morrow know;
'Tis man alone that joy descries,
With forward, and reverted eyes.

Smiles on past Misfortune's brow
Soft Reflection's hand can trace;
And o'er the cheek of Sorrow throw
A melancholy grace;
While Hope prolongs our happier hour,
Or deepest shades, that dimly low'r
And blacken round our weary way,
Gilds with the gleam of distant day.
Still where rosy Pleasure leads,
See a kindred Grief pursue;
Behind the steps that Mis'ry treads
Approaching Comfort view:
The hues of Bliss more brightly glow,
Chastis'd by sabler tints of Wo;
And, blended, form, with artful strife,
The strength and harmony of life.

See the wretch that long has tost
On the thorny bed of pain,
At length repair his vigour lost,
And breathe and walk again:
The meanest flow'ret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common air, the sun, the skies,
To him are op'ning paradise.

Humble Quiet builds her cell
Near the source whence Pleasure flows;
She eyes the clear crystalline well,
And tastes it as it goes.

* * *

Mr. Mason observes, 'I have heard Mr. Gray say, that M. Gresset's *Epitre a ma Sœur* gave him the first idea of this Ode; and whoever compares it with the French poem will find some slight traits of resemblance, but chiefly in our authour's seventh stanza.' We shall only add, that if Gray had written more of such poetry as the above, he would have been called *charming* as well as *elegant*.

The images in the stanza, *Yesterday*, &c. belong to Horace, Ode IV, lib. 1; but Gray has added the philosophical reflection, and embellished what he has borrowed: *the herd stood drooping by*, is worthy of Thomson.

SAVAGES.

What authour or what traveller is it, who exclaims, on seeing certain inhabitants of an unknown coast, on which he landed; "We have nothing to fear from these people, they have not till now, seen a European."

I have heard this invective against civilized society much commended, yet I doubt if the theory is tenable: like other theories, it must be taken with considerable allowance.

If it were possible that navigators

could have their choice, whether, in case of being wrecked, they would prefer a civilized or a savage coast, I believe few would prefer the latter.

That too many Europeans, an unhappy portion of society, unprepared by education, uninfluenced by religion, and stimulated by poverty, are continually practising a merciless system of plunder and violence, I confess with regret; but it is not customary to pronounce on the excellence of a vintage, by a sample, drawn from the feculencies and dregs of the wine-vat.

The savage after depriving the boat of its nails, and the carpenter of his tools, as hunger or a love of variety may tempt, will devour the unfortunate seamen.

Against such attacks, says the authour I quote, a traveller, aware of his danger, may guard; but in his intercourse with polished society, evils present themselves, which prudence cannot provide against, nor circumspection avoid.

He will probably be received and treated with kindness, his wants will be liberally supplied; but these attentions will afford a very slender compensation, for a wife seduced, a daughter debauched, and a son corrupted: for a heart pierced by the envenomed arrows of hypocrisy, fraud, and ingratitude, concealed under the specious exteriour of hospitality and friendship.

MERRIMENT.

A gentleman speaking of the Carmen Seculare of Horace, in company where a learned alderman was present, his worship gravely observed, "that in the line of his business, he had frequently employed men from every company of porters and carmen between Tower-hill and the Old Swan, and he would be bold to say, that there was no such company as the *carmen seculare* from one end of *Thames-street* to the other."

A gentleman who sat to Hayman for his portrait, desired that it might be kept a secret. Notwithstanding this injunction, the artist showed it to some of his friends, who not being able to discover any likeness, Hayman observed that the gentleman wished it to be *kept a secret.*

TO A BAD POET.

Your verses, friend, I think with you,
Surpassing all in one sense;
Downright and *sound*, you said; 'tis true;
All *sound* and *downright* nonsense.

A devotee lamented to her confessour her love of gambling. "Ah Madam," replied the priest, "it is a grievous sin. In the first place consider the great loss of time." "Yes," replied the fair penitent, "I have often grudged the time that is lost in *shuffling* and *dealing*."

Rock, the comedian, when at Covent Garden, advised one of the scene-shifters, who had met with an accident, to the plan of a subscription; and a few days afterwards he asked for the list of names, which, when he had read it over, he returned. "Why Rock," says the poor fellow, "won't *you* give me something?" "Why, zounds, man didn't I *give* you the hint?"

A man of wit being asked what pleasure he could have in the company of a pretty woman who was a loquacious simpleton, replied, "I love to *see* her talk."

Two gentlemen at Bath having a difference, the one went to the other's door early in the morning, and wrote 'Scoundrel' upon it. The other called upon his neighbour, and was answered by a servant, "That his master was not at home, but if he had anything to say he might leave it with him." "No, no," says he, I was only going to repay your master a civil visit, as he *left his name* at my door in the morning."

A gallant soldier was once heard to say, that his only measure of courage was this: "Upon the first fire I immediately look upon myself as a dead man; I then fight out the remainder of the day as regardless of danger as a dead man should be. All the limbs which I carry out of the field I regard as so much gained, or as so much saved out of the fire."

For The Port Folio.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

A RHAPSODY,

ADDRESSED TO MISS M——.

O, Poetry! thou nymph divine
Who first supreme in Greece didst shine,
When first thy Homer sung;
Sweet melody and Fancy's child,
First born when frolick thought was wild,
Was vigorous, bold and young!

Thou who command'st the tear to flow,
The warriour's noble soul to glow,
And pant for glorious fame.
And when some mighty deed is done,
The sparkling crown of conquest won,
Dost consecrate his name.

Celestial nymph, be thou my guest,
With thy own raptures fire my breast,
And agitate my soul!
Lead me beyond the utmost bound
Of every earth-seen comet's round,
To Heaven's remotest pole.

With thee entranced, I'll soar sublime,
Impetuous whirl thro' space and time,
And mock the lightning's speed,
The glorious dead shall rend the shroud,
And mightiest heroes round me crowd
From graves oblivious freed.

And if thro' pathless wastes of night,
Thou tak'st a bold adventurous flight,
Far from a glimpse of day.
Like Milton let me sweep the string,
With hideous clang—let chaos ring
With sounds of dire dismay.

But if thou curb'st thy wild career,
And sweet Elysian scenes appear,
May then the liquid lay
Of murmuring love, mellifluous sound,
And on the breeze diffus'd around,
In undulations play.

O. P. Q.

IN OBITUM
MARIÆ ROSS,

Filiæ JA. Ross Imperatoris municipio Lancastriensi, quæ, die octodecimo Julii, 1803, obiit.

THRENUS

VIRGINUM sociarum
MARIÆ ROSS,

Exiit ergo Maria et amanda ac cara Maria!
Exiit æthereas incolitura domos.

Exiit heu! dulcis nobis nunquam reditura;
Obvia nunquam oculis post erit cara Comes!

Mortua namque Maria, est mortua pulchra Maria,
Pompæ olim nostræ quæ decus eximium.

Numinis haud Tecum sacratas ibimus aras:
Non manibus structas incolis alta domos.

O quoties, et quanta locuta est nostra Maria!
Dulce faceta ferens, dignaque mente pia.

Nos, Tibi funereos, igitur, faciemus honores;
Nos lachrymas ferimus munera; nos gemitus.

Audiet et respondebit resonabilis Echo,
Audiet et flentes nos tacitumque nemus.

Interea lachrymare viæ, collesque videntur
Cara Maria perit! Nostra Maria perit!

Voce supremâ ter citâ, nunc condimus urna
Relliquias Hujus: *Cara Maria vale!*

Fama diu at terris durabunt nomina, virtus
Insignis tua, laus, egregiumque decus.

EPIGRAMS.

TO A QUACK.

Tom, you tell us, has treated you ill past example:
He's sick—go prescribe—your revenge will be ample.

On a Person not celebrated for his Veracity.

On Tuesday next, says Tom to Ned,
I'll dine with you, and take a bed.—
You may believe him, Will replies,
Where'er Tom dines, he always *lies*.

"Alas! I've been robbed." 'Friend, I join in your grief.'
"All my verses are gone!" 'How I pity the thief!'

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